

## **Research Activity Panel Meeting Summary**

Gregor M. Cailliet, MLML, RAP Chair

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### **APRIL 1998 MEETING**

Host: NMFS Pacific Fisheries Environmental Laboratory  
Friday April 17, 1998 9:00am – 12:0pm  
Attendance: 13 RAP members and 2 guests.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Overview of activities at PFEL (George Boehlert)**

- PFEL focus is largely on research on environmental variability as it effects marine resources.
- Significant effort is being expended on improving electronic data distribution.
- For example, upwelling indices are posted on the web (<http://www.pfeg.noaa.gov/>).
- PFEL research focus changes with NOAA needs.
- Currently the lab is addressing fishery habitat and salmon issues, including how oceanographic variability effects salmon populations.
- The lab is in a growth mode to address the Salmon issues. PFEL has two new positions including an oceanographer and a computer programmer.

#### **USGS El Nino studies (B. Richmond)**

- Bruce Richmond with the Coastal and Marine Geology program of USGS gave an overview of their current El Nino studies.
- Projects include LIDAR baseline mapping; beach profile monitoring; processes of bluff retreat; historical shoreline analyses.
- Detailed information on these studies can be viewed at the following web sites:  
LIDAR-<http://aol.wff.nasa.gov/aoltn/projects/beachmap/98results>  
Beach Mapping:  
<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/crs/ALACE/index.html>  
USGS El Nino Projects: [http://www.usgs.gov/el\\_nino.html](http://www.usgs.gov/el_nino.html)  
USGS Coastal and Marine Geology:  
<http://walrus.wr.usgs.gov/>

### **DISCUSSIONS**

#### **The National Ocean Conference (G. Boehlert)**

- The conference will be held June 11 and 12.
- The agenda will focus on Commerce, Global Security, Environment and Health, Exploration and Education. Panelists will be selected out of Washington D.C. to address these issues. Local participation at this level will be minimal.
- Benefits for regional research include potential funding and public awareness.
- The invitation list and agenda are largely being developed out of Washington D.C.

- The RAP felt that fisheries should be discussed under environment and health, in addition to under commerce.
- Local activities are being developed largely by M.R.C. Greenwood (UCSC), Marcia McNutt (MBARI), and Congressman Sam Farr; national activities are being coordinated locally by John Robinson (MBNMS) and Capt. Don Mautner (FNMOC). There is discussion of a ground breaking of the new laboratories associated with the Long Marine Lab complex and an MOU between regional research institutions.
- The role of including the IMBI effort into the event was discussed, though the RAP felt they should focus their effort on updating the MBNMS Research Plan, including marine biodiversity issues. The plan may be included with the proposed new research institution MOU. Congressman Sam Farr may be able to assist with this.

### **Cal Trans activities on Big Sur (W. Douros)**

- A history was given on Cal Trans operations on the Big Sur coast.
- A review of regulations included no dumping unless at grandfathered sites.
- Cal Trans has an excellent report on the topic written by MLML Benthic Lab.
- Congressman Sam Farr wants it to develop an agreement between regulatory agencies to facilitate road repair in a timely manner.
- Bill asked for and received advice on where to dump and possible mitigation:
  - pick dumping sites based on intertidal offshore biota present
  - do not put unnatural amounts of soil near kelp beds
  - monitor dumping to see what the impacts are
  - suggest not dumping big rocks on pocket beaches because they will not disperse
  - suggest dumping in areas of continual natural slides
  - dirt may be needed for road repair related to a CDFG project
  - Rikk Kvitek has a preliminary management plan for addressing this issue
  - Slide areas should be revegetated to prevent soil erosion and noxious weed proliferation
- In addition to the above, mitigation suggestions were made in the case that dumping in the Sanctuary was necessary: a boat for related studies, monitor impacts, developing a long term management plan for the area, restoring the salt ponds at Elkhorn Slough, local revegetation, kelp mapping, intertidal surveys for key species, mapping sediment movement process, a wave buoy for the region.

### **Guadalupe Oil Mitigation and Sea Otter studies (E.Faurot-Daniels)**

- Related to the Guadalupe oil field, there is an environmental mitigation project request by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Proposals are due May 18th.
- Ellen is looking for letter of support from the RAP and collaborators on the following project.
  - Long term ecosystem work (10 - 20 years): nearshore coastal ecosystem health by focusing on top predators as indicators (and some of their prey); looking at health in more detail than mortality (e.g., reproductive capabilities, immune suppression); and perhaps some marine bird and mammal contaminants research
  - Links to MBNMS include co-locating monitoring sites and information for natural resource damage assessment;
- RAP suggestions on the proposed project:

- Include shore bird behavior and diet with shellfish monitoring;
- Incorporate the existing Beach COMBERS program;
- Consider determining the source of tar coming present on central CA beaches
- Focus on one or two topics, because chemical analyses will be costly.

#### **Funds available for Sea Otter Research (S. Shimek)**

- The sea otter recovery team has concluded the sea otter population is decreasing in CA
- Potential causes: disease, depressed immune system, entrapment in live fish pot fishery
- FOSO looking into funding a fishery observer program, an e-mail announcement on the request for proposals will be sent out by e-mail.

#### **Sanctuary Currents: wrap up '98 and planning '99 (C. Pomeroy)**

- There was a review of the '98 evaluation forms passed out at the event.
- Suggested theme: climate change, including El Nino; habitat mapping (MBNMS Project).
- USGS expressed interest in being the RAP representative. Bruce Richardson agreed to forward this to the USGS.

#### **SHORT INFORMATION ITEMS**

Verbal items:

##### **SAC retreat and April meeting (G. Cailliet)**

- View the minutes on the web

##### **Legislation update (C. Pomeroy)**

- Coastal bond and parks bond will probably be combined
- Marine life management act is being modified, see legislature web site
- The sea life conservation act calls for a review of the concept of marine protected areas
- Relevant discussion papers can be viewed at [www.yoto98.noaa.gov/](http://www.yoto98.noaa.gov/).

Written items:

##### **Classroom At Sea (A. De Vogelaere)**

- Michele Malarney of NOAA is developing a program called Classroom At Sea. Student will be visiting the R/V McArthur, developing web pages on related research activities, and communicating with marine scientists about their projects. Brian Edwards, Baldo Marinovic, Don Croll, and Curt Collins from the 1998 MBNMS R/V McArthur cruise have agreed to participate.

Handouts were distributed on the following:

##### **MBNMS Permit Report**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Suggest update from CDFG Marine Division in Fall